SOUTHERN LABOR IN REVOLT

by

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The purpose of this pamphlet is to present in as brief a form as possible what is clearly one of the most complex industrial problems of our time. Obviously, our treatment of it must necessarily have suffered from the necessity of condensing it into the short space of twenty-four pages. Thus we can claim for it no more than the hope that it will serve as a basis for discussion among groups of people both within and without the colleges who have read of and have been interested in the recent labor troubles throughout the South. We have attempted to give in a general way the industrial background of the present situation, to describe some of the working conditions which are to be found, and to tell the story of the strikes growing out of these two sets of phenomena.

We have been assisted in the collection of material by the following of our fellow students: Anna Walling, Rhoda Bohn, David Stickney, and Walter Robinson; without their enthusiastic 'grubbing for the facts' it would have been impossible for us to write this pamphlet. We wish to extend our appreciation to the Executive Officers of the League for Industrial Democracy for their warm encouragement and willingness to co-operate with us in our venture; to thank Professor Clair Wilcox of Swarthmore College and Dean A. J. Muste of Brookwood Labor College for valuable criticism, Tom Tippett and William Ross who generously permitted us the use of their manuscript, *Stretch-Out*—their as yet unpublished account of their experiences in the South during the recent strikes. Above all, we wish to express our gratitude to Mary Fox, Executive Secretary of the League for Industrial Democracy, who gave freely of her time and advice, and without whose tact, and infinite patience with our inexperience in the ways of publication these pages would never have reached the printer.

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FOREWORD

by *Norman Thomas*

This pamphlet is so good that it needs no blurb of a foreword to boost it. It was written by a group of college students but it seeks no circulation as a somewhat unusual expression of the mind and activities of youth. It is valuable first and foremost as a sympathetic but objective statement of facts concerning the Southern textile industry and the revolt of the workers in a field where events are likely at any time to write new chapters. The organizing campaign in the South will be better understood in the light of the record these Swarthmore students have compiled. It is no easy task to write the story of industrial conflict fraught with so much suffering and tragedy, with sympathy and yet without sentimentality, with regard for the facts and yet without an inhuman detachment which is a fatal approach to any human problem. The authors of this record are to be congratulated for their success in avoiding these evils.

While I have no mind at all to push the circulation of this pamphlet on the far from complimentary argument, "See what a good job these intelligent students have done", it is worth while to point out not only to other students but to an interested public that this pamphlet is a sign of a very encouraging awareness in our American colleges and universities that economic and political problems are the very stuff of life. The capacity of the present generation of college men and women to understand the textile situation and to cross by understanding and sympathy those protective barriers which hedge about their pleasant world is a capacity upon which no small share of our future success in dealing constructively with the "fifty billion wild horses of our machine age" may depend. The Swarthmore group which initiated and carried through this particular study is, I hope and believe, not a solitary phenomenon in the college world but the forerunner of many groups of men and women who will make similar studies and who by their actual experience in industry and agriculture will bring to the political and economic life of tomorrow a point of view and an understanding which their fathers too largely have lacked.

Wisely, I think, our authors have avoided conclusions. It is better for readers to draw their own conclusions. Certainly such facts as they present cannot but raise searching questions concerning our boasted American prosperity and our boasted American industrial in-

telligence. Grant that the textile industry is a sick industry. Why is it sick? What becomes of the idea that free competition is an economic cure-all? Where is the industrial management under private initiative to bring the industry to health? What type of social control shall we seek to establish? Is there need for a national code of minimum labor standards? Is the sickness of an industry a real justification for low wages, long hours and inhuman working conditions? How valuable is industrialization accompanied by these evils? Must every newly industrialized region repeat the history and the tragedy that has always accompanied the beginnings of industrial revolution? Have the professions of civil liberty which Americans still mouth any meaning in time of industrial conflict?

These are some of the questions a reading of this pamphlet must raise in the minds of men and women with any kind of imagination and understanding. And these are the questions which our college education must help the next generation to answer or else it will be a tragic failure not worth its social cost.

INDUSTRIAL BACKGROUND

THE rise of the South to a commanding position in the production of cotton goods has taken place only in recent years. For many reasons the history of the cotton industry in the United States up to the end of the nineteenth century has been the history of New England. The availability of a relatively large supply of capital, combined with the advantages of an early start, her proximity to the great markets of the east, the potentialities of her great streams and rivers for the production of water-power with which to operate the new machinery, all served to give a decided impetus to the growing industry which carried it far ahead of any of its possible competitors.

Essentially a middle-class population, New Englanders adapted themselves to the factory system as easily as had their British ancestors. State governments encouraged the invention of new machinery and the importation of models of the latest developments in productive efficiency from the mills of Manchester; they encouraged the immigration of skilled mechanics and weavers. Above all, New England, situated as it was on the Atlantic seaboard, was blessed with a humid climate, a factor very essential in the production of cotton textiles since the weaving of cotton fibre is only possible in a moist climate.

In 1840 of the 1,700,000 spindles in active use throughout the country, 1,500,000 were in operation in New England mills. By 1900 New England was working over 13,000,000 spindles, and as late as 1913 still held a commanding lead with 17,000,000 spindles as against 14,000,000 for all other sections of the country combined.

The rise of the South was largely the result of certain natural advantages which it had to offer. Transportation charges in the securing of the raw material were practically negligible owing to the presence of cotton growing plantations in the immediate vicinity. Water power was present in abundance in the hills of the Carolinas, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Textile producers were offered immunities and privileges in the form of state exemption from taxes, and the absence of legislative regulations relating to the hours and conditions of work. In addition, the disadvantage involved in the prev-

alence of a hot, dry climate (the reverse of which had proved of such value in the North) was eliminated shortly before the end of the nineteenth century by the invention of the artificial humidifier, which made possible the weaving of cotton under the driest of atmospheric conditions.

Another great factor in the rapid industrialization of the South has been the concerted attempt on the part of Chambers of Commerce in Southern cities and towns to attract northern capital. The South has eagerly sought industrialization; Southern interests have stressed the natural advantages which the South has to offer. Above all, they have emphasized the presence of a considerable population of cheap white labor in the hills of North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. To the Northern industrialist, who feels himself handicapped by restrictive legislation in his dealings with his employees, this inducement is very appealing. He is assured that he will have no labor troubles, that his employees—docile and individualistic as they are—will not dream of pursuing a policy of collective action such as has hampered his freedom in New England. In the publicity of Marion, N. C. issued in 1929 by the local Chamber of Commerce, there appears this paragraph:

> There are tax assessments to be adjusted, and Marion's attitude is fair and constructive. There are water, sewerage, and utilities to be supplied, and Marion's spirit is liberal. *There are police and legal protection to be provided, and Marion's response is certain.* There are many, many ways, indeed, in which Marion evidences a public sentiment in behalf of industries that will always be valuable and pleasing to the proprietors of the new enterprises. (Italics ours).

Southern textile development has been further hastened by the failure of New England manufacturers to adapt their plants to changing technological developments within the industry. Consequently, New England has been gradually forced out of the lead in productive capacity. In 1921 New England had reached its maximum number of active spindles, 18,387,789, while the Southern cotton growing states had 15,708,988. By 1928 the active spindles in New England had decreased to 13,815,242, and those in the South had increased to 18,281,754. The significance of the competitive advantage of this increase in productive capacity on the part of the cotton growing states is best seen in terms of active spindle hours. During 1921-22, when the South had 2,678,801 fewer active spindles than New England, their active spindle hours were 47,841,112,275 as compared with 36,783,239,798 in New England. By 1927-28 the active spindle hours throughout the Southern textile region had increased to 65,272,570,540; in the New England states the active spindle hours had decreased to 27,862,204,584. The transference of

the center of cotton manufacturing from New England to the South is further indicated by the amount of cotton used. New England, in 1900, consumed 386,330 bales more than the cotton growing states while in 1928 the Southern states used 3,675,411 bales more than New England.

Overproduction and changing styles—from cotton goods to rayon and silk—combined with ruthless competition has seriously depressed the entire textile industry. To a large extent, Southern mills have been able to withstand the competition and depression through relatively smaller overhead and labor costs.

Many of the new mills in the South have been organized with New England capital. The Pepperell Company operates two plants with a total of 200,000 spindles in Lindale, Georgia and in Opelika, Alabama. The Victory Mills of the American Manufacturing Company, among the oldest in the country, have closed all of their factories in the North and have re-located in Alabama. The recent troubles at the great Loray Mill at Gastonia took place in a mill owned by the Manville-Jenckes Company of Providence, Rhode Island; the Baldwin family of Baltimore controls 51% of the stock of the East Marion Manufacturing Company at Marion, N. C.; the Bemberg-Glanzstoff Rayon Corporation at Elizabethton, Tennessee, is controlled by German interests. It is estimated that about 50% of the capital invested in Southern textiles is owned by Northern industrialists.

The shift in the center of production from New England to the South has raised problems of adjustment, in the introduction of modern productive efficiency and the factory system into what may be called a "plantation culture," for which the South has been unable to find a satisfactory solution. In dealing with these problems the Southern mill owner has retained the paternalistic attitude toward his employees which his forefathers adopted toward their Negro slaves. The mill hand is still for the owner the same helpless child that the Negro is; for him he has a personal responsibility (in many of the smaller mill towns the workers are still addressed by their first names by their employers). In return, the mill worker undertakes to perform loyally whatever his employer asks of him. It is a peculiar relationship which we in the North have never quite understood, but unless we do grasp this curious mixture of economic necessity and psychological ties, our understanding of the present labor situation will be hopelessly muddled.

The business-man-planter, thrown into a highly complex industrial system, and forced of necessity to adapt himself in the short space of twenty-five years to conditions which it has taken the rest

of the country three-quaters of a century to reach, finds himself faced with problems in the solution of which he has had no previous experience. The technique which he must use is that which has been peculiarly adapted to a plantation system. Consequently, there has been a clash between a collective, technological industrialism and an eighteenth century plantation paternalism.

The South is re-enacting the industrial revolution of the nineteenth century, and it remains to be seen whether it will profit by the experience of the last century, or continue to muddle along.

WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE SOUTH

Southern mill workers are very different in character from those employed in mills throughout the rest of the country. They are the descendants of an Anglo-Saxon stock which settled in the hills of the Carolinas, Kentucky and Tennessee before and shortly after the War of Independence—no Negroes are used, except in very minor capacities. Here these 'poor whites' have lived a very isolated existence. Until very recent times, they have been, as it were, cut off from the rest of the country, and have developed customs and an institutional life of their own which is in marked contrast with the technological industrial society with which we are familiar. They have been small-scale farmers for the most part, drawing barely enough to clothe and feed themselves from their efforts to till the thin soil of these regions. From the industrial point of view, they are lazy, shiftless and self-sufficient; knowing no other existence, they have been content with the meager comforts which they have been able to secure.

Southern manufacturers have not been slow to capitalize upon the exploitability of this source of supply. Realizing its potentialities as a docile, fairly efficient labor force they have embarked upon intensive campaigns to lure the hill people from their villages into the mill towns. The efforts of the Enka plant at Asheville, N. C., are typical of the methods used. Personnel directors go among the people in the hills, describing the wonders to be found in the mill towns with their electricity, bath tubs, stores, moving pictures, automobiles,—in short, all the comforts of modern life. They make every effort to sell them the towns. Realtors usually follow to buy up the farms, thus completely preventing any return to the hill villages, should the potential worker not find his glorious hopes realized.

Fifteen years ago it is very doubtful whether such efforts would have met with the success which they secure at the present time. But the war gave many of these people a view of what life might be if they lived elsewhere than in their isolated villages. Their farming operations have been much curtailed by the introduction of large-scale scientific agriculture; prohibition has greatly limited their moonshine activities; good roads and the automobile have made them far less isolated. Nor can it be denied that life in the mill towns, however bleak and miserable it may be, is potentially and, in most cases, actually far more satisfactory than that in the hill villages. All in all, it could not have been a very difficult task for a skilled personnel manager to persuade them that they had everything to gain by leaving their homes in the hills and in looking for a richer and more comfortable life in the towns.

Here, however, they find themselves thrust into an existence completely dominated by the factory. A great number of them have become tubercular as a result of long hours spent in the damp lint-laden atmosphere within the plant. They find that they are merely members of a herd, while in the hills each one had a definite place in the life of the community. The mill has usurped the function of the home as the meeting place of the family. The home has become merely the place where one topples off to sleep between periods of work. In many instances whole families must work; very often the mill will not employ less than two members from the same family.

Marion, N. C., is a typical example of conditions in some of these mill towns. The following letter from a woman worker in the Clinchfield Mills describes the life led by these people.

> Everybody spits on the floor. And many tuberculosis patients work in the mill. I've been there six years, and I see them while they are ill, until they can stand up no longer. The mills are swept while we are working, and fill our breath with lint and dust full of germs.
>
> The man who scrubs pours water from a barrel, rubs it around and then sweeps it into a shovel. Nothing is cleaned by such scrubbing.
>
> The toilets are filthy and ill smelling. We have to drink in there. Water is put in the toilet in a pail carried in from one of the wells in the village. One dipper is furnished with each pail. All the workers in one room drink from the same dipper. That is why many of the workers wait until after they go home after six o'clock to drink water.
>
> The doffers and spinners have to eat their dinner any time they can. The mill does not stop off for the noon hour. The mill runs day and night. Tags are sewed on to show who makes the most defects. More bad work is made at night.
>
> An inspector sits and keeps her eye on moving cloth as thousands and thousands of yards flow over the rolls without any rest. Is it any wonder that eyes and muscles ache?
>
> If a worker is caught up with work they cannot leave the mill. One worker worked hard and got one half day ahead. She stayed home and was docked for losing the time. Inspectors earn $8.50 a week. $9.35 is

the highest wage, which happens once a month. The graders make 20c a day more than the inspectors.

I'm thinking about a widow woman in the village who has a little girl ten years old to feed and clothe and keep in school. She also has an invalid father to support, who hasn't done any work in four years. He has nervous disease. Her older sister and mother are too old to work in the mill, but manage to do the house work, washing and ironing for the family. The widow makes $11.00 a week to support all of them.

She is a spooler, and stands on her feet from six in the morning until six at night. She underwent an operation six years ago—she isn't strong. There is a fine doctor in Marion who does this family's doctoring without pay. There are many other village families who have a hard struggle.

Some few live in back lanes and have gardens. They fatten a hog, keep a cow and chickens. They get along better.

The houses in the village are built high off the ground. Very open and cold in the winter time. Haven't been painted inside in ten years; are smoked and dirty. The roofs leak badly.

The toilets in the village are earth-pit toilets. They are seven feet deep. Many of the wells are below the toilets. This summer they were digging new pits for the toilets. The old pits were filled up with filth running all over the ground into a ditch in front of a house by the street, and it was left in that condition. The mill workers have to bury it themselves after they come home from work in the evening.

The president and secretary of the company live in Marion a mile and a half away from the mill. The overseers and store force are paid living wages. Have much better wages than the other workers. They have water in their houses and also get a Christmas bonus.

Those in charge over the workers do not like to give them notices to vacate the houses for they know the conditions. Many are sick and without money to move.

I hope there is some information here that you do not have. I am sorry that I haven't education enough to write as I wish.

The picture of Marion which is given here is typical of many, all too many of the mill towns scattered throughout the South. In a great number of the newer establishments conditions are far better. Towns are laid out in accordance with modern town planning principles. Houses vary in type and color and are more substantially built. Sanitary conditions are far more satisfactory in both home and factory. But this is far from being the general rule; for the most part the cottages are four room frame structures, built cheaply and uniformly drab in appearance. Sanitary appliances are meager in the extreme, most of the houses being sadly deficient in the ordinary necessities demanded by the comforts of modern life.

One reason for the existing conditions lies in the fact that many of the towns are company-owned. Often mills were erected in isolated spots chosen primarily for their value as water-power sites or for their proximity to the supply of raw material, and in such cases accommodations had inevitably to be supplied by the mill-owner. Built by the company on its own land the sole justification for the existence of these towns has been the service which they render to the factory.

The resulting control which the employer is enabled to exercise over his employees' lives has meant the almost complete loss of the latters' freedom and individual identity. Loss of job means loss of home. The mill owner supports the village church, subsidizes the schools and gives financial aid to the village athletic teams. Some plants maintain community houses, playgrounds for the children, swimming pools and athletic fields. The more elaborate forms of welfare work affect, however, only a limited number of the employees. Paid welfare workers, according to the report made by Miss Harriet Herring of the University of North Carolina in 1926, were attached to only 49 out of 322 plants.

Thus workers are dependent upon the mill-owner for a great many things beyond their mere wage-contract. Where the mill is small the relationship is often a friendly one. But in the newer ones, dominated for the most part by northern corporations, personal loyalty on the part of the employee tends to break down. His only dealings are with an overseer who is merely the representative of a group of men who have their headquarters in New York, or Boston, or Providence. But while the old bonds of personal loyalty have tended to disappear the domination by the company is stronger even than before. The methods employed by the old paternalistic employer are still used with great effect.

Completely isolated both physically and socially the mill villages have remained economic units within themselves. The necessity of going to work at an early age has resulted in most of the children's dropping out of school as soon as they may legally enter employment—and this is at a woefully early age in most Southern states—to take jobs in the factory. Thus the family remains a cotton mill family.

The significance of the company town as a factor in the Southern labor situation can hardly be overemphasized. In a sense it is a form of industrial feudalism in which the worker is altogether dependent upon his employer in the securing of a decent chance to make a living. In such communities all life centers around the mill; it is the one common denominator in the lives of all the inhabitants. They look to it to provide them with the wages whereby they may obtain the necessities of life; they look to it to supply through the company store their food, clothing and few luxuries; they look to it to provide them with schools, preachers, and opportunities for the healthy development of their children.

In many cases wages are so meagre that every member of the family must work in the mills in order that their combined incomes may be sufficient to feed and clothe each one. The average size of families in North Carolina mill towns is 5.17 persons; 2.82 persons work steadily in the mills. In August, 1929, the United States Department of Labor published a statistical report on wages and hours in the textile industry. When comparison is made between wage scales in the South and in the North, a very striking contrast may be seen.

WAGES AND HOURS IN COTTON MANUFACTURING
(U. S. Dept. of Com.)
Average Actual Earnings

State	*Av. Wage per Wk.*
New Hampshire	$18.14
Massachusetts	16.47
Rhode Island	18.93
Alabama	10.19
Georgia	11.73
North Carolina	12.23
South Carolina	9.56

But while these figures show the average wage of all workers they do not show the very small incomes upon which some families must live. Many workers, especially the more skilled, receive higher pay than the average, but there are, on the other hand, semi-skilled men who receive incredibly low incomes. The Picker Tenders are typical of this group.

WAGES OF PICKER TENDERS
(U. S. Dept. of Labor)

State	*Av. Full Time Hrs. per Wk.*	*Av. Actual Pay per Wk.*
Me.	54.3	$13.55
N. H.	53.8	17.32
Mass.	50.7	16.25
R. I.	52.3	18.25
Conn.	52.6	16.80
Ala.	55.0	8.52
Ga.	56.7	10.00
N. C.	55.7	11.64
S. C.	55.0	7.79
Va.	55.3	9.73

The report of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, December 28, 1929, gives figures for the prevailing rate of wages in the Marion and Clichfield mills. According to the president of the Marion Manufacturing Company, his employees averaged $14.00 a week. Interviews with strikers resulted in the following statement in regard to their wages before the strike:

Woman, spooling room (Marion) working 12 hours a day, 64½ hours a week, earned $7.50 a week.

Woman, spooling (Marion) worked 12 hours and 20 minutes a day, earned $8 to $9 a week.

Man, spinning room (Marion) worked 14 years for company, a doffer, earned $18 a week, 11 hours a day.

Woman, weaver (Marion) worked 17 years for company, averaged $17.50 a week, worked 11 hours and 10 minutes a day.

Two girls, from the country (Marion), earned $8 a week each, had to pay $5 a week each for board.

Boy, 17 years old (non-union, now working), (Clinchfield), a weaver, had worked 3 months, earned $11 and $12 a week. Learned weaving by 'helping mom', without pay for about a month.

Weaver, (Clinchfield) worked for company 6 years, made $16.50 a week, 11 hours on night shift, no time off for lunch, 'grabbed a sandwich' if he could.

Girl, spinning room, (Marion) worked 8 years for company, 12 hours a day, averaged $8.30 a week.

Girl, card room (Clinchfield), worked 2 years for company, doffing, 12 hours and 5 minutes a day, averaged $9.15 a week.

Man, slasher room (Clinchfield), worked 3 years for company, earned $13.75 a week, 10 hours a day.

Girl. 15 years old, has worked 1¼ years for company (Clinchfield), spinning room, averaged $5 a week—made $6.50 one week, the highest she ever made—worked 11 hours and 15 minutes a day, said about 40 girls in her department on same hours, most of them 14 or 15 years old. Her sister working through the noon hour, a 12 hour day, sometimes made $12.50 a week, at the very highest.

Woman, widow, 6 children, worked 2 years, spool room (Marion), 12 hours a day on piece work, worked 66 hours a week, averaged about $7 a week.

Man, loom fixer (Marion), worked over 12 years for company, wages $19.70 a week, worked 66 hours a week, paid for 60 hours.

Man, oiler, $11 a week.

Man, sweeper, $11 a week.

Man, job 'taking out quills' on looms, $11.20 a week, has several children and a sick wife. It is, of course, not possible to say how many such cases there are in the mills.

The president of the United Textile Workers states that they tabulated the wages of union workers (from Marion and Clinchfield) taking figures from the pay tickets of these workers and arrived at an average of $10.85 per week.

It has been maintained by Southern mill-owners that in spite of wage scales such as these the worker in the South receives a higher

real wage than do workers in the North, since the actual purchasing power of the dollar in the South is about double the value of an equivalent amount in New England.

The only detailed study of comparative wage scales and cost of living which may be considered authoritative is that which has been conducted by the National Industrial Conference Board. This examination covered three representative cotton mill communities in the South—Greenville and Pelzer, S. C., and Charlotte, N. C.—and Fall River, Mass., one of the leading textile centers in the North. The investigation endeavored to find the average minimum cost of living for a family of man, wife and three children under fourteen years of age. The results of this study reveal that the cost of living in the North and South varies only slightly. The following table shows the cost of living for such a family.

ESTIMATED ANNUAL MINIMUM COST OF LIVING PER FAMILY

Budget Item	*Greenville S. C.*	*Pelzer S. C.*	*Charlotte, N. C. in mill houses*	*Charlotte, N. C. other houses*	*Fall River Mass.*
Food	$743.60	709.80	772.20	772.20	606.32
Shelter	44.72	48.00	45.07	117.10	117.60
Clothing	282.50	278.57	278.15	278.15	257.96
Fuel, heat, light	65.64	78.24	72.99	88.70	74.41
Sundries	257.14	259.48	269.62	269.62	281.11
Totals	$1393.60	1374.09	1438.03	1525.67	1337.40

A further table based on these figures compares average yearly earnings in the towns listed with the cost of living, corrected by means of applying the appropriate cost of living index published by the U. S. Dept. of Labor.

AVERAGE YEARLY EARNINGS AND THE COST OF LIVING

City	*Total Cost of Budget June,* 1929	*Average Earnings Cotton Goods* 1927
Greenville, S. C.	$1.312.77	$652
Pelzer, S. C.	1,294.39	658
Charlotte, N. C.	1,346.00 (a) 1,428.03 (b)	691

(a) For families living in company owned houses
(b) For families living in non-company owned houses.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that the figures do not represent the real purchasing power which the workers can command when they have received their pay checks. In many cases, they are paid in "scrip," a booklet of coupons which entitles them to make purchases at the company stores without cash. In this way, the employer is enabled to deduct from the actual wages paid out for purchases at the company store, for sickness insurance, and for many other items such as the rent on their houses, electricity where such is supplied, water and other charges, and the actual cash received at the end of the week or month is often an almost negligible sum. In instances where the worker falls behind in his work because of sickness, unemployment or accident, he often becomes indebted to the company in a way that sometimes involves in advance a high percentage of his wages, and leaves him with practically no cash. Most families are usually in debt to the company store. The prices charged by the latter are, it is claimed by many investigators, considerably higher than those charged for similar articles in the independent stores. In order to obtain cash with which to deal at these stores, the employee must sell his booklet of coupons, and this is usually done at a considerable discount. Thus it is very difficult to obtain accurate figures for the real purchasing power which the workers are able to command, and it is at the same time possible to assume that they are securing even less than their share of the products of their labor than would appear from the figures given.

Long hours are characteristic of almost every Southern mill. They are commonly ten a day for a five day week, with a five hour day on Saturday. Some mills, particularly those in which night work is being done, run an eleven hour shift five days in the week and close down completely on Saturday and Sunday. The few legislative requirements relating to hours of work in the South are thoroughly inadequate, and are never enforced. Although children from twelve to fourteen years of age are not permitted to work on the night shift in most of the leading textile states in the South, no limit is set upon the night work of women. In general, the amount of night work varies according to the volume of orders which the mills have on hand. The North Carolina Department of Labor reported that the proportion of night-run spindles in that state for the period 1923-24 was 39.8% of the total. According to the 1925-26 report night work was carried on in most of the 406 cotton mills listed. Before the strikes there existed in the East Marion and

Clinchfield mills a day shift of 12 hours and 20 minutes, and a night shift of 11 hours and 20 minutes. No time was allowed for lunch which had to be eaten while the workers were standing at their machines.

The following table shows that the number of hours worked by cotton mill workers in the South and North does not vary greatly when averages are considered for all workers in given states, though those in the South are uniformly somewhat longer.

HOURS OF COTTON MILL WORKERS

State	*Av. Full Time Week*	*State*	*Av. Full Time Week*
New Hampshire	53.6 hours	Georgia	56.1
Massachusetts	48.8	North Carolina	55.8
Rhode Island	52.2	South Carolina	55.0

But there are many mills where considerably longer hours are worked. Those at Marion are representative. Here, with a day shift of twelve hours and 20 minutes, and a night shift of eleven hours and 20 minutes, the full time working week would be between fifty-six and sixty-one hours. Some workers are working as many as 66 hours a week.

Recently another grievance has been added to the list in the introduction of the stretch-out. Southern mill owners have begun to modernize their production methods and have introduced straight-line production. In many cases this has been done by importing an efficiency engineer to re-organize production operations. Stop watch in hand, these engineers have attempted to gear the Southern worker to Northern factory speed, without, however, taking into consideration the great difference in working hours and the shorter factory experience of Southern workers. If they had been accustomed to consider the human equation and had listed a reduction of hours as a necessity in guaranteeing greater unit production the efficiency policy would probably have met with very little opposition in Southern factories. Instead they quickened the speed of the machines, discharged surplus labor, and expected the workers to keep pace. The methods used were in general somewhat as follows: additional helpers were introduced in order to allow weavers to tend a greater number of looms; one man was in some cases expected to work 48 looms where he had formerly managed 28; wages remained substantially the same, though some increases were granted when the system was first inaugurated (the rate was soon reduced to the

original level in most instances); hours were not cut. In some mills the introduction of the stretch-out has been gradual and has been accomplished with little opposition on the part of the workers, and considerable economies have resulted. In these mills, hours were generally reduced, wages increased somewhat, and the co-operation of the workers sought. In others, however, the stretch-out has been fought very bitterly, particularly where no attempt has been made to adapt working conditions to the higher gearing of the productive operations.

SOUTHERN LABOR IN REVOLT

In the early spring of 1929 mill workers in most of the southeastern states, thoroughly aroused by the conditions and their accumulated personal grievances, left the looms in a series of strikes—the most spectacular in the recent labor history of the United States. While strikes occurred throughout the Southern textile region, those at Elizabethton, Tennessee, and Gastonia and Marion, North Carolina, have been by far the most important through the number of people involved. The Bemberg-Glanzstoff Rayon Corporation, the Loray Mill, the Clinchfield Yarn Mill and the Marion Manufacturing Company, at which these particular disturbances occurred, have a combined labor force of about 15,000 men and women.

ELIZABETHTON

In March, 1929, some 5,000 rayon workers of the Bemberg-Glanzstoff Rayon Corporation walked out. No union organizers had been or were, at that time, on the scene. The workers organized themselves and only after that had been accomplished did they appeal to the United Textile Workers Union (affiliated with the American Federation of Labor) for aid and leadership. The response on the part of the American Federation of Labor to a call from unorganized territory has not been so whole-hearted since the days of the great steel strike in 1922. The United Textile Workers Union sent leaders, among them Alfred Hoffman. The Woman's Trade Union League came in, and President Green, himself, delivered a speech for unionism at Happy Valley. Both huge rayon plants were closed down, and 5500 workers, more than half the population of Elizabethton, were on the streets prepared to carry on a militant strike.

The original strike centered around a protest against a weekly wage of $8.96, out of which it was found impossible to meet the high rents charged for company houses. Charles G. Wood, of the United States Department of Labor, was sent down from Washington to arbitrate, and on March 21 the strike was settled: wages were to

be increased from five to fifteen percent; strikers were to be taken back and no discrimination to be used against union men; future grievances were to be mutually adjusted.

The company, however, failed to live up to this agreement. Alfred Hoffman and Edward McGrady of the United Textile Workers were kidnapped by leading citizens of the town and warned that they would be in danger of their lives if they returned. They came back the next day. On April 15 workers in both mills again went out on strike against the company's failure to keep the terms of the settlement.

The strike continued until May 5 when the company determined to open the plant with outside labor. Shortly afterwards, large numbers of strikers were arrested for 'intimidation' of strike breakers. Two companies of the National Guard were sent to the scene by the governor and reported directly to the mill superintendent. Every organized power in the community denounced the strike and co-operated with the company in breaking the resistance of the workers. Finally, on May 25 a new settlement was reached through the efforts of Miss Anna Weinstock of the United States Department of Labor, the workers voting to go back with the proviso that strikers not returned to their old jobs should be given some reason for this action through the company's new personnel manager, E. T. Willson, in whom the strikers had some confidence.

Thus, while the men did succeed in securing the right of joining the United Textile Workers without endangering their jobs, the establishment of a personnel department, and the influence which this department was enabled to exercise in the settlement of this particular strike, has led to company unionism which, to a large extent, has destroyed whatever gains the strikers were able to secure.

Gastonia

In contrast with the strikes at Marion and Elizabethton, that at Gastonia was planned and organized by the National Textile Workers Union (Communist). On April 1 from 90 to 95% of the employees of the Loray and Pinckney mills of the Manville-Jenckes Company struck for a forty hour, five day week, a twenty dollar minimum wage, recognition of the union, abolition of the stretch-out, cheaper light and rent, and better sanitary conditions.

The immediate strike issue was clouded by cries of "Communism" on the part of the local press, and the community. Some violence resulted and the National Guard was called out in answer to a plea by the sheriff. The following week Superintendent Baugh of the Loray mills threatened to evict 650 union families from their homes,

but so many of the workers returned to work that the threat was never carried out.

On April 17 a masked mob of about 100 men raided and destroyed the Union Headquarters and supply store. Eleven strikers who had been sleeping in the company store were held without cause, but no attempt was made by the local police to arrest members of the raiding party. A Grand Jury investigated the riot, admitted that violence had been done, but was "unable to fix blame."

The Union built a new hall on the edge of the town and erected a tent colony for the evicted workers' families a short distance away. A Union guard was maintained to protect this property; strike meetings were held daily. On the night of June 7, after the usual picket line had been broken up, Chief of Police Aderholt with a group of deputies appeared at the entrance to the tent colony, and tried to force his way in without a warrant. Aderholt attempted to disarm the Union guards while his deputies chased the strikers through the colony. At that moment shooting began and resulted in five casualties. Aderholt was killed, three other deputies were wounded, and a union organizer shot. Although no one had seen who fired the fatal shot, by June 9, sixty-five strikers had been arrested, of whom sixteen were held for murder, among them Fred Beal, the Communist leader, and three women organizers from New York.

Hysteria swept through the county; strikers and their families were routed from the tent colony, and the surrounding woods searched for union sympathizers. The *Gastonia Gazette* published an editorial entitled "Their Blood Cries Out," urging open mob violence against the strikers.

The trial which achieved more publicity than any other event in the textile strikes began on July 29. Twenty-three workers affiliated with the National Textile Workers were indicted for the riot; thirteen of them were charged with first degree murder, three with second degree murder, and seven with minor offences. On motion by the defense, Judge Barnhill granted a change of venue to Charlotte, N. C. due to the prejudice of the local community. At the beginning of the proceedings he made every effort to keep extraneous issues, such as religious and political beliefs, out of the trial, and both sides have commented on his impartiality.

When the trial was renewed at Charlotte on August 29, a mistrial was declared when one of the jurors went insane at the sight of a wax image of Aderholt.

Shortly afterwards, Ben Wells, an English Communist, Cliff Saylors, and C. M. Lell were kidnapped by a mob, which they testified

in court included John G. Carpenter, county solicitor, policemen, and witnesses for the state in the impending trial of Beal. Their testimony further stated that they were taken to a deserted spot and beaten. An investigation was ordered by Governor Gardner but upon a hearing of the case the charges made by Wells, Saylors, and Lell were dropped. Further attempts to reopen the case have been promised, but have not materialized.

On October 5 the re-trial of Beal and those indicted with him began. The outstanding event of these proceedings was the impeachment, which Judge Barnhill sustained, of the testimony of Mrs. Miller on the ground that she was a declared atheist. Seven out of the sixteen accused were convicted. Beal, Clarence Miller, Carter, and Harrison were sentenced to from seventeen to twenty years in the state penitentiary; McGinnis and McLaughlin to from twelve to fifteen years; and Hendricks to from five to seven years.

Marion

During the Elizabethton strikes Alfred Hoffman at the request of the Marion mill workers had frequently been in Marion carrying on a campaign for union organization. Although he was not anxious to have a strike in view of the difficulty of securing the necessary funds for relief operations, a walk-out occurred on July 12 in the Marion Manufacturing Company's mill. Twenty-two men who had affiliated with the Marion local of the United Textile Workers Union had been discharged by the superintendent. On July 11 the local had sent the following questionaire to R. W. Baldwin, president of the company.

1. Will the Marion Manufacturing Company give us the 10 hour work-day at the present scale of weekly wages, without reduction in wages?
   Answer: No.
2. Will the Marion Manufacturing Company give us double time for quartering?
   Answer: No.
3. Will the Marion Manufacturing Company give work to persons discriminated against for union membership, listed on the following page?
   Answer: Has not been any discrimination as far as the office knows. But will not permit soliciting in the mill.
4. If the Marion Manufacturing Company will give these persons work, or portions of them, will these persons get the same chance as those now working?
   Answer: No reply.
5. If the Marion Manufacturing Company should take back persons listed, will such persons be given back their old jobs, or jobs equivalent in wages?
   Answer: If taken back it will be for such jobs and work as are open.

6. Is the Marion Manufacturing Company willing to allow its employees to assist in waste elimination and reduction of production costs, for the mutual benefit of both parties interested?
   Answer: Yes, and will help.
7. Is the Marion Manufacturing Company willing to meet from time to time a committee of its employees to take up with the management any justifiable grievances that might arise?
   Answer: Yes, but only employees.

They further protested against the addition of 20 minutes to their eleven hour night shift, demanding a ten hour day, an average weekly wage of $12.10, and the right to belong to the union.

On July 25 the company secured an injunction against all picketing by the union; this was disregarded by the strikers, and many of them were arrested on charges of rioting, although there was little violence. On August 12th 1,000 workers in the neighboring Clinchfield Yarn Mill struck, and joint mass-meetings were held to protest the lockout which ensued.

John Peel, vice-president of the North Carolina State Federation of Labor and organizer for the United Textile Workers, was placed in charge of the strike. All through the summer William Ross, educational worker for the American Federation of Full Fashioned Hoisery Workers (affiliated with the U. T. W.), and Tom Tippett an instructor at the Brookwood Labor College, were engaged in the strike organization and relief work.

On September 11th the strike was settled and most of the workers went back to their jobs with the assurance that there would be a five hour reduction in the working week—though there was to be no increase in the hourly wage which meant that the weekly wage would be somewhat less than before—and that there would be no discrimination against union members with the exception of the twelve most prominent in the strike.

However, President Baldwin, of the Marion Mill, broke this agreement from the start by refusing to employ ninety-two union men while at the same time giving their jobs to one hundred and twenty-five imported scabs. Two of the Clinchfield mills joined in this refusal to uphold the agreement and discontinued the night shift altogether.

There ensued a series of attempts on the part of the Union and L. L. Jenkins, a banker and cotton-mill owner, to get Baldwin to live up to the terms of the settlement, but he refused to enter into negotiations, and another strike was called for Ocober 2nd.

On the night of October 1st special armed deputies were sworn in by the sheriff, with the avowed purpose of intimidating the workers. At one in the morning an incentive to strike was furnished in

the course of an argument between a foreman and a boy worker in which the former declared, "There is not going to be a Union and there is not going to be any more strikes. The next time we'll shoot hell outa yer." In the excitement of the moment, the boy reached up and shut off the power, and the night-shift walked out on strike.

Seventy-five pickets were posted at the mill gates to warn the day force. At six o'clock the workers began to arrive and remained outside the gate. Sheriff Adkins ordered them to disperse and becoming thoroughly confused at their refusal to obey his orders fired a tear gas gun into their midst. Blinded by the gas, the crowd turned to flee, and it was not until then that the deputies opened fire. The men were caught in a narrow passage way between two walls, and could not escape. Six were killed, and twenty-four wounded. Witnesses have testified that the strikers were unarmed, and that most of them were shot in the back as they attempted to escape from the blinding gas. Baldwin was reported in all the southern papers as having said when he heard of the massacre, "the sheriff and his men are damned good shots, six out of sixty is damned good shooting. If I ever organize an army, I'll hire these men to save gunpowder."

On October 3rd Sheriff Adkins and fourteen of his deputies were arrested, and immediately bailed out by Baldwin. Thirty-seven strikers were arrested, and charged with "resistance, conspiracy and rebellion." Later the rebellion charge was changed to one of "riot." Sheriff Adkins was exonerated at the preliminary hearing, but eight of his deputies were held for second degree murder.

Owing to the inflamed attitude of the community, a change of venue was granted to Burnsville, N. C. A conviction seemed certain when newspaper men who were on the scene at the time of the shooting testified that the deputies opened fire on the strikers immediately after the discharge of the tear-gas. The defense, however, introduced witnesses who claimed that one of the strikers had been the first to shoot, and that the front of the mill was riddled with bullet marks when it was examined the next day. No evidence was found that would indicate that any of the deputies had been hurt, however.

Nevertheless, on December 21, the eight men were acquitted, after twenty hours of deliberation by the jury.

THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE

It is only within recent months that the American Federation of Labor has begun to realize the threat which Southern labor conditions present to the American trade union movement. Sporadic efforts have been made from time to time to unionize particular plants, but until the Toronto Convention in November, 1929, no concerted drive was even contemplated by the Executive Officers. The Union cannot hope to continue in its position of importance in the Northeastern States if its sphere of influence is not to be extended throughout the new industrial South. Employers in the North cannot be expected to keep their agreements with the Union when there is a constant threat to their business in price-cutting by non-union producers whose labor costs can more easily be adjusted to the exigencies of the competitive system.

At the Toronto Convention, however, the American labor movement seemed definitely to undertake a program for the organization of all Southern mill workers. On January 6, 1930, organizers from all national and international unions met in Charlotte, N. C., to lay plans for the unionization campaign in the South. Whether this program will succeed remains to be seen. Certainly, the difficulties which will be encountered are enormous; the problem of overcoming the past inertia of the labor movement with competent and intelligent leadership will be an important factor; the Union will have to expect the opposition of practically every business and industrial interest in the South, and in the North as well. Northern textile corporations are far too heavily mixed up in the present Southern situation to stand by merely as somewhat interested spectators.

Already there have been indications of the nature of the opposition which the Union will have to fight. Up to the present time almost all the so-called "respectable" elements in the South have lined up solidly with the mill-owners. Nor does the South welcome the interference on the part of Northern organizers in what they consider to be their own personal affairs. The violence which greeted the shooting of Aderholt at Gastonia, the kidnapping of Wells, Saylors and Lell, the wanton murder of the striking unionists at Marion are all evidences of the highly inflamed attitude of mind which is characteristic of the reaction throughout the South toward the present labor troubles. The failure to convict those who have been accused of the violence is merely another aspect of the same problem.

At the end of seven months of struggle for the right to organize the strikers' toll is: six men and one woman killed; twenty-four wounded; seven sentenced to prison for from five to twenty years; three men sentenced to six months on the chain gang; seven sen-

tenced to a total of one hundred and seventeen years in the state penitentiary; seven kidnapped; and five flogged by mobs.

For the Southern manufacturers and the state of North Carolina: exoneration for the eight deputies accused of the Marion murders; a half-hearted and belated attempt to prosecute those who killed Ella May Wiggins, initiated only after persistent public pressure mostly from without the state; and the dismissal of the charges against the kidnappers of Wells, Saylors and Lell.

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